

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-13

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INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

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TO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 017405

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CE

SUBJECT: CEYLONese AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON DEPUTY ASSISTANT
SECRETARY SOBER

BEGIN SUMMARY: CEYLONese AMBASSADOR KANAKARATNE, IN
COURTESY CALL ON DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY SOBER RAISED
ISSUES OF US INDIAN OCEAN POLICY AND NEGATIVE CONGRESSION-
AL VOTE ON IDA REPLENISHMENT. END SUMMARY

1. INDIAN OCEAN: TOWARD END OF HOUR-LONG COURTESY CALL
ON SOBER, AMBASSADOR ASKED ABOUT IMPLICATIONS FOR US
INDIAN OCEAN POLICY OF REOPENING OF SUEZ CANAL. AMBASSADOR
WONDERED IF FACT SOVIETS WOULD HAVE EASIER ACCESS TO
INDIAN OCEAN PROMPTED REPORTED AMERICAN ENHANCEMENT
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INDIAN OCEAN NAVAL PRESENCE AND DIEGO GARCIA CAPABILITY.

SOBER RESPONDED THAT THERE HAS BEEN A "CHRONOLOGY" OF RECENT EVENTS WITH WHICH AMBASSADOR IS FAMILIAR AND TO WHICH ENLARGEMENT OF US NAVAL FORCE IN INDIAN OCEAN IS RELATED. SUEZ CANAL REOPENING WOULD GIVE SOVIETS EASIER ACCESS TO INDIAN OCEAN AND THIS WAS ONE FACT WHICH ENTERED INTO OUR CONSIDERATIONS. SOBER EMPHASIZED WE HAD BEEN SUPPORTING THE PROPOSED REOPENING OF SUEZ DESPITE FACT THAT IT WILL AFFORD SOVIETS BETTER ACCESS. WE NEVERTHELESS HAD TO TAKE THAT FACT INTO ACCOUNT. HE NOTED ALSO THAT SOVIET NAVAL PRESENCE HAS INCREASED CONSIDERABLY SINCE

1968. IN RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR'S REFERENCE TO US-UK DISCUSSIONS HERE THIS WEEK AS REPORTED IN PRESS, SOBER SAID THESE DISCUSSIONS TOOK PLACE PERIODICALLY AND IN COURSE OF TALKS THE RANGE OF DEVELOPMENTS AND OUR JOINT INTERESTS IN INDIAN OCEAN AREA REGULARLY CAME UP FOR CONSIDERATION.

2. AMBASSADOR SAID HE HOPED WE COULD KEEP HIM INFORMED OF ANY DECISIONS SINCE THIS ALLOWED HIM PUT THEM IN CONTEXT FOR GSL. NOTED GSL HAD LISTENED TO HIS ADVICE IN PREPARING ITS MUTED RESPONSE TO HANCOCK EXERCISE. SOBER RESPONDED THAT GSL MODERATE STANCE ON HANCOCK WAS WELL KNOWN AND APPRECIATED IN USG. SAID WE APPRECIATE VALUE OF KEEPING OUR FRIENDS INFORMED AND DEFINITELY WOULD KEEP IN MIND CEYLONese INTEREST IN KNOWING OF ANY RELEVANT DECISIONS THAT MIGHT BE MADE. IN THAT EVENT WE WOULD PLAN TO INSTRUCT OUR AMBASSADOR IN COLOMBO TO BRIEF GSL BUT ALSO WOULD KEEP AMBASSADOR KANAKARATNE INFORMED. FYI: INSTRUCTIONS FOR BRIEFING GSL WILL BE SENT SOONEST. WE WOULD PLAN BRIEF KANAKARATNE AFTER EMBASSY COLOMBO RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS AND MADE APPROACH TO GSL. END FYI.

4. THOUGH BILLED AS COURTESY CALL IT APPEARS KANAKARATNE MAY HAVE RAISED INDIAN OCEAN UNDER INSTRUCTION (REFTEL). COUNSELOR (DE ALWIS) WHO ACCOMPANIED AMBASSADOR SUBSEQUENTLY INFORMED SRI LANKA DESK THAT AMBASSADOR WOULD BE REPORTING CONVERSATION.

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5. AMBASSADOR ALSO EXPRESSED DISMAY HE AND OTHER LDC AMBASSADORS FELT AT CONGRESSIONAL REJECTION OF LEGISLATION FOR US REPLENISHMENT CONTRIBUTION TO IDA FUND. SAID THIS MIGHT DAMPEN LDC ENTHUSIASM FOR US PROPOSALS ON DEALING WITH OIL SHORTAGE. SOBER STATED THAT ADMINISTRATION'S SHARP DISAPPOINTMENT OVER REJECTION OF IDA REPLENISHMENT HAD BEEN EXPRESSED PROMPTLY BY SECRETARY STATE AND TREASURY. IN SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATION

SOBER POINTED OUT INCREASED OIL BILL TO SRI LANKA AND
OTHER LDC'S AS RESULT OF OIL PRICE RISE FAR MORE
EXPENSIVE THAN LOST IDA FUNDS. AMBASSADOR AGREED BUT SAID
NEGATIVE VOTE HAD BAD PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT ON LDC'S. KISSINGER

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